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Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom

July 9, 2002

The President. Please be seated. Thank you all very much. Good afternoon, and welcome to the White House. Laura and I are honored to welcome our recipients and family members and friends to the people's house.

As we honor today's Presidential Medal of Freedom winners, I want to acknowledge the presence of our great Secretary of State, Colin Powell, and his wife, Alma. Secretary Powell has won the Presidential Medal of Freedom twice—once with distinction. I'm not sure what happened the other time. [Laughter]

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is the highest civil honor our Nation can bestow, and we award it today to 12 outstanding individuals. The men and women we honor span the spectrum of achievement. Some are fighters; others are healers; all have left an enduring legacy of hope and courage and achievement.

Hank Aaron overcame poverty and racism to become one of the most accomplished baseball players of all time. "When I was in a ballpark," he said, "I felt like I was surrounded by angels, and I had God's hand on my shoulder." By steadily pursuing his calling in the face of unreasoning hatred, Hank Aaron has proven himself a great human being, as well as a great athlete.

Bill Cosby is a gifted comedian who has used the power of laughter to heal wounds and to build bridges. "I don't think you can bring the races together by joking about the differences between them," he said. "I'd rather talk about the similarities, about what's universal in their experiences." By focusing on our common humanity, Bill Cosby is helping to create a truly united America.

Placido Domingo has performed in more roles than any other tenor in the history of opera. His boundless admiration for the composers of the great operatic music makes him push himself to the limit. "They spend years

creating operas," Placido has said, "lots of suffering and lots of sweating." Well, by suffering and sweating himself, Placido Domingo is making sure that the great music of the past will continue to delight opera lovers the world over.

The week after September the 11th, Peter Drucker sent a letter to his friends and associates urging them "not to abandon daily life and civil society. That's exactly what the terrorist wants," he said. Peter Drucker has devoted his life to strengthening civil society. His determination to help our nonprofit and faith-based institutions carry out their desperately needed missions more effectively has made him one of the greatest management experts of our time.

Katharine Graham was a forceful, courageous, and deeply principled newspaper publisher. She described herself as someone who suffered from a sense of inferiority but who was forced to become a leader after her husband's death. "What I essentially did," she wrote, "was to put one foot in front of the other, shut my eyes, and step off the edge." Under her brilliant guidance, the Washington Post has become one of America's most powerful newspapers. Katharine Graham will always be remembered for her determined pursuit of journalistic excellence.

D.A. Henderson is a great general in mankind's war against disease. From 1966 to 1977 he led the World Health Organization's global smallpox eradication campaign. Today, he is helping protect America from the threat of bioterrorism. "We need to plan, not panic," says this master medical planner. Our Nation is fortunate to be able to draw on D.A. Henderson's great store of wisdom and experience as we work to lift the dark threat of terrorism from the nation and our world.

Irving Kristol is a wide-ranging thinker whose writings have helped transform America's political landscape. As young men, he and his fellow student radicals in City College's "alcove number one," devoted themselves to solving the ultimate problems of the human race. Today, Irving Kristol is still grappling with ultimate problems, and in thinking them through, he has vastly enlarged the conservative vision.

Shortly after he arrived on South Africa's Robben Island to begin serving his prison

sentence for resisting apartheid, Nelson Mandela refused an order to jog from the harbor to the prison gate. When a prison warden threatened to kill him, here's what he said: "If you so much as lay a hand on me, I will take you to the highest court in the land, and when I finish with you, you'll be as poor as a church mouse." [*Laughter*] The warden backed off and so, eventually, did other, more powerful representatives of apartheid—all of whom were humbled by Mandela's immense moral authority. It is this moral stature that has made Nelson Mandela perhaps the most revered statesman of our time.

Gordon Moore is a great businessman and innovator. His interest in science was sparked by a chemistry set when he was a boy. "With the chemistry set," he recalls, "I had to get a good explosion at the end, or I wasn't happy." [*Laughter*] In the worlds of business, science, and philanthropy, Gordon Moore has been setting off explosives ever since. And the ripple effects of his explosive genius have helped create our age of information.

Nancy Reagan has devoted herself to her family and her country. As first lady of California, she spoke out eloquently on behalf of POWs and American servicemen missing in action. As First Lady of the United States, she has led an antidrug campaign—she led an antidrug campaign that helped reduce teenage drug abuse. Today we honor Nancy Reagan for her eloquent example of loyalty and courage and abiding love.

Fred Rogers has proven that television can soothe the soul and nurture the spirit and teach the very young. "The whole idea," says the beloved host of Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood, "is to look at the television camera and present as much love as you possibly could to a person who needs it." This message of unconditional love has won Fred Rogers a very special place in the heart of a lot of moms and dads all across America.

A.M. Rosenthal's calling is journalism; his passion is human rights. "When I come out for human rights," he says, "I'm not talking in the abstract. I know that if I lived in a dictatorship, I would be in jail very quickly." A.M. Rosenthal's outspoken defense of persecuted Christians in Asia, Africa, and the

Middle East have truly made him his brother's keeper.

Each of these men and women has enriched the life of America and the world. And we're honored to have them with us here today.

And now the military aide will call each of the winners forward and read their citations.

[*At this point, Maj. James M. McAllister, USA, Army Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals.*]

The President. Again, I want to thank you all for coming to honor such remarkable men and women. The Presidential Medal of Freedom, established by President Kennedy in 1963, recognizes individuals who have made "an especially meritorious contribution to the security or national interests of the United States, or to world peace, or to cultural or other significant public or private endeavors." I'm sure you'll agree that today's Presidential Medal of Freedom recipients richly deserve their honor.

And now, Laura and I would like to invite you all to join us for a reception in honor of today's distinguished Presidential Medal of Freedom recipients, in the room back here in the back.

May God bless our recipients, and may God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:05 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting an Account of Federal Expenditures for Climate Change Programs and Activities

July 9, 2002

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In accordance with section 559(b) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2002 (Public Law 107-115), I transmit herewith an account of Federal expenditures for climate change programs and activities. This report includes both domestic and international programs and activities related to climate change, and associated costs by line